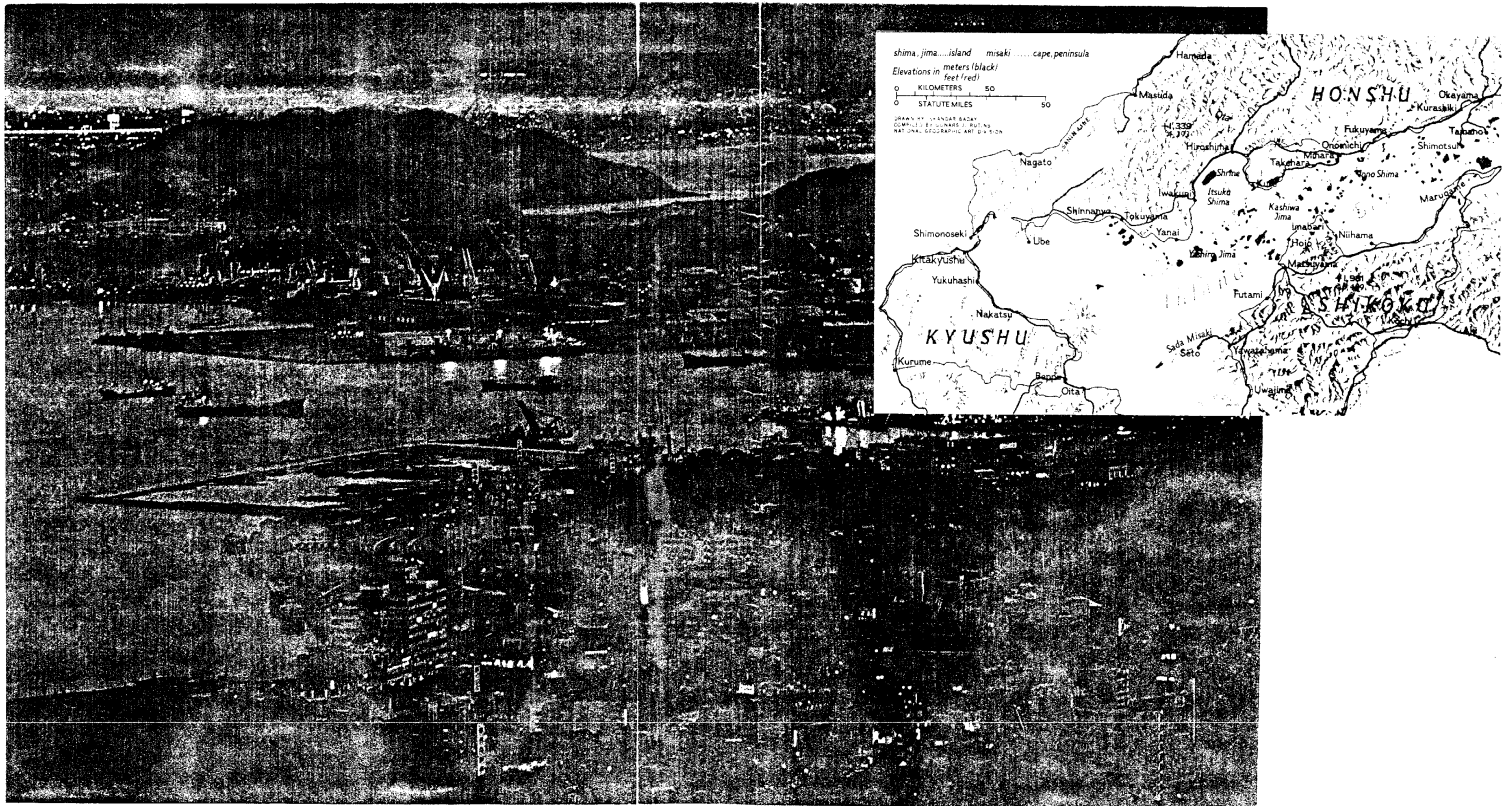


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Rising tide of industry lays the Inland Sea, from these shipyards and petrochemical plants flanking Shimonoseki Strait at the western entrance all the way to the densely packed megalopolis of Osaka at its eastern end. Unprecedented growth since World War II has meshed the region's industrial centers into a powerhouse that accounts for more

than a fourth of the nation's production. The sea resembles a vast conveyor belt, busy with the ebb and flow of international trade. Through huge ports such as Kobe, iron ore, chemicals, and coal pour into the maw of the area's steel and textile mills, reemerging in countless forms to flow out to worldwide markets.

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